

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please insert the following paragraph at the beginning of the specification.

This application is a 371 of international application PCT/JP2003/009532, which claims priority based on Japanese patent application Nos. 2002-227619 and 2003-62910 filed August 5, 2002, and March 10, 2003, respectively, which are incorporated herein by reference.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 34, line 15, with the following rewritten paragraph:

In the following description, a polymer alloy fiber having an islands-in-sea structure and comprising a lower soluble polymer as a sea part and a higher soluble polymer as islands parts is taken as an example. In this case, the abundance ratio of islands each having a diameter of 200 nm or more, namely the abundance ratio of coarsely aggregated polymer particles is 3% or less in terms of area ratio of the total islands. This significantly avoid decrease in color property in the resulting nanoporous fibers. The islands may have somewhat deformed elliptic shapes and do not always have

perfect circular shapes. The diameters thereof are determined from the areas of the islands in terms of circle. The area of the total islands is a total area of all the islands present at cross section of a fiber and can be estimated based on the observation of the cross section of the fiber or the polymer blending ratio. The area ratio of islands each having a diameter of 200 nm or more is preferably 1% or less. More preferably, the area ratio of islands each having a diameter of 100 nm or more is 3% or less. The area ratio of islands each having a diameter of 100 nm ~~or less~~ or more is further preferably 1% or less.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 53, line 4, with the following rewritten paragraph:

Namely, it is important to set the blending ratio of the higher soluble polymer at ~~10 to 30%~~ 5 to 60% by weight and to set the melt viscosity ratio of the lower soluble polymer to the higher soluble polymer in a range from 0.1 to 2. In addition, important factors are to set the length of a kneading section in a twin-screw extrusion-kneader, if used, at 20 to 40% of the effective length of the screws in melt-blending and melt-spinning using such a twin-screw extrusion-kneader, or to use a static mixer having a number

of splits of 100×10^4 or more in melt-blending and melt-spinning using such a static mixer, or to use a blending tank for pellets having a capacity of 5 to 20 kg in dry blending and melt-spinning. The dry blending is inferior in blending uniformity but superior in cost to the melt-blending, since the former comprises a simpler process. In the case of dry blending, the above-mentioned master pellets are preferably used to prevent uneven blending to some extent.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 77, line 2, with the following rewritten paragraph:

The resulting crimped polymer alloy yarns were free from coarsely aggregated polymer particles. The area ratio of islands each having a diameter of 200 nm or more to the total islands was 0.1% or less, and the area ratio of islands each having a diameter of ~~[[20]]~~ 100 nm or more was 1% or less. The islands-part polymer constituted a lined structure. The crimped yarn had a CR of 32% but exhibited somewhat large yarn unevenness of a U% of 2.2% due to large yarn unevenness during spinning, as compared with Example 1. The physical properties of the false-twisted yarn are shown in Table 2.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 110, line 10, with the following rewritten paragraph:

Example 18

The melt kneading procedure of Example 1 was repeated, except for using, instead of the copolymerized PET, a poly(L-lactic acid) having an optical purity of 99.5% or more, a weight-average molecular weight of 15×10^4 , a melt viscosity of 857 poises (240°C , 2432 sec^{-1}) and a melting point of 170°C and setting the kneading temperature at 220°C . The weight-average molecular weight of the polylactic acid was determined in the following manner. A solution of a sample in chloroform was mixed with THF (tetrahydrofuran) to obtain a specimen solution. The specimen solution was subjected to measurement at 25°C using a gel permeation chromatograph (GPC) Waters 2690 available from Waters, and the weight-average molecular weight in terms of polystyrene was determined. The N6 used in Example 1 had a melt viscosity of 570 poises at 240°C , 2432 sec^{-1} . The kneaded product was subjected to melt spinning by the procedure of Example 1, except for changing the discharge rate per one orifice and the number of spinneret orifices and setting the spinning rate at 3500 meters per minute, to thereby obtain a highly oriented undrawn yarn of 105 dtex, 36

filaments having a strength of 3.1 cN/dtex, an elongation percentage of 107% and a U% of 1.2%. The yarn could be satisfactorily spun without any yarn breaking during continuous spinning for 24 hours. This was subjected to draw false-twisting by the procedure of Example 1, except for setting the draw ratio at 1.4 to thereby obtain a 76 dtex, 36-filament false-twisted yarn having a strength of 4.0 cN/dtex, an elongation percentage of 29%, a U% of 1.3% and a CR of 35%. In this procedure, the temperature of the heater was set at 160°C in consideration of the melting point of the poly(L-lactic acid). Thus, the resulting false-twisted yarn was substantially free from not-untwisted portions, had excellent appearance quality and exhibited good processability in draw false-twisting. The cross section of the fiber of the crimped polymer alloy yarn was observed under a TEM to find that the fiber was free from coarsely aggregated polymer particles, the area ratio of islands-part polymer particles having a diameter of 200 nm or more to the total islands parts was 0.1% or less, and the an average diameter of the islands-part polymer was 80 nm. The yarn had excellent physical properties as shown in ~~Table 1~~ Table 6.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 122, line 17, with the following rewritten paragraph:

The polymer alloy fiber was subjected to circular knitting and alkali treatment by the procedure of Example 10, to remove 99% or more of the copolymerized PET, to thereby obtain a round braid comprising a nanoporous ~~N6 fiber~~ N66 fiber.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 136, line 16, with the following rewritten paragraph:

Example 30

"LYCRA" was covered by the procedure of Example 28 with the polymer alloy fiber prepared according to Example 6. The resulting yarn was formed into a short panty. The TEM observation of the nanoporous N6 fiber sampled from the short panty shows that the fiber was free from coarse pores having a diameter of 50 nm or more, and the average diameter of the pores was 25 nm. The pores were unconnected pores. The yarn strength was 2.5 cN/dtex. ~~The tights~~ The short panty had good color property and a high DMR of 5.6%, exhibited a delicate touch and fresh hands like a skin and felt good to wear. The short panty had an ammonia adsorbing rate of 55%. The combination use of the polyurethane fiber yarn imparts high stretchability and improves dimensional stability of the short panty upon washing.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 140, line 23, with the following rewritten paragraph:

Example 33

Materials were spun by the procedure of Example 10, except for changing the spinneret and the discharge rate per orifice, the resulting yarn was wound by the first take-up roller 8, doubled and received by a bunker. The yarns in the bunker were subjected to gathering to obtain a tow of 15×10^4 dtex. The tow was drawn in a water tank at 90°C at a draw ratio of 3.2. The drawn tow was passed through a crimper, to which an oil was fed, and was cut. The resulting cut fiber had a single yarn fineness of 4 dtex, number of crimp of 10 per 25 mm and a fiber length of 51 mm. The cut fiber had a strength of 3.3 cN/dtex and an elongation percentage of 40%. The cross section of the fiber was observed under a TEM, to find that the fiber was free from coarsely aggregated polymer particles, the area ratio of islands each having a diameter of 200 nm or more to the total islands was 0.1% or less, the area ratio of islands each having a diameter of 100 nm or more was 1% or less. The islands had an average diameter of 33 nm and had a lined structure.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 142, line 23, with the following rewritten paragraph:

Example 35

A nonwoven fabric comprising a polymer alloy fiber and having a METSUKU (mass per unit area) of 35 g/m² was prepared by spinning in the same manner as in Example 25, taking a yarn by an air sucker, separating fibers and collecting on a net, and subjecting the collected yarn to calendar rolling. The fiber taken by the air sucker had a single yarn fineness of 2 dtex. The spinning rate determined based on the fineness was 4500 meters per minute. The cross section of the polymer alloy fiber sampled from the nonwoven fabric was observed under a TEM, to find that the fiber was free from coarsely aggregated polymer particles, the area ratio of islands each having a diameter of 200 nm or more to the total islands was 0.1% or less, and the area ratio of islands each having a diameter of 100 nm or more was 1% or less. The islands had an average diameter of 31 nm and had a lined structure.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 159, line 24, with the following rewritten paragraph:

~~Example 52~~ Example 53

A five-ply back satin of 180 g/m² was prepared by using the crimped polymer alloy yarn prepared in Example 1 as a weft and a regular N6 fiber (44 dtex, 12 filaments) as a warp. The article was subjected to alkali treatment by the procedure of Example 1, to obtain a back satin woven fabric comprising a nanoporous N6 fiber. The shape and physical properties of the nanoporous fiber sampled from the fabric were determined and were found to be similar to those in Example 1. The article was buffed to fibrillate the surface layer of the nanoporous fiber and to form a multitude of fibrils having a diameter of about 0.01 to 1 μ m which covered the surface of the woven fabric. The fibrils were further separated by water punching. The resulting fabric was suitable as a fabric for wiping cloths.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 160, line 14, with the following rewritten paragraph:

~~Example 53~~ Example 54

The nonwoven fabric comprising the nanoporous N6 fiber prepared in Example 33 was buffed to obtain a multitude of fibrils having a diameter of about 0.01 to 1 μ m, which covered the surface

of the nonwoven fabric. The resulting fabric had a surface touch near to the skin, unlike conventional nylon nonwoven fabrics.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 160, line 21, with the following rewritten paragraph:

~~Example 54~~ Example 55

The nonwoven fabric comprising the nanoporous PP fiber prepared in Example 35 was buffed to obtain a multitude of fibrils having a diameter of about 0.01 to 1 μm , which covered the surface of the nonwoven fabric. This article was more suitable as a filter than conventional PP spun bond nonwoven fabrics.